

Dick-Janney House  
(Kate Waller Barrett House)  
408 Duke Street  
Alexandria  
Virginia

HABS No. VA-696

HABS  
VA  
7-ALEX,  
160-

PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20240

DICK-JANNEY HOUSE  
(KATE WALLER BARRETT HOUSE)HABS  
VA  
7. ALEX,  
160-

Location: 408 Duke Street, Alexandria, Virginia

Present Owner: Mr. and Mrs. E. Grey Lewis

Present Use: Residence

Statement of Significance: Documentary research combined with a close analysis of the fabric reveals that the nucleus of the structure was the brick one-story dwelling insured by Dr. Elisha C. Dick in 1796. The building's importance historically lies in the circumstance that it is the only home projected and partially built by the famous Alexandria medical practitioner.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

## A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: The initial portion before 1796; the balance in the early nineteenth century.
2. Architect: Unknown
3. Original and subsequent owners: Dr. Elisha C. Dick was the first owner.

The chain of title from 1758 is as follows:

Lot 84 (at the southwest corner of Duke and Royal Streets) consisting of one-half acre of ground, was conveyed by the Trustees to John Muir on July 18, 1758. This was the basic land grant for the two properties now identified as 404 and 408 Duke Street (see HABS report on 404 Duke Street, VA-703).

When Dr. Elisha Cullen Dick insured his dwelling with the Mutual Assurance Society on June 8, 1796, the record is clear that he was then in residence and that the house stood between his vacant ground on the east and the same on the west. The house itself was brick, 32 by 24 feet, and one story high--as was normally the case, half stories or attics were not designated. Outbuildings consisted of a wood kitchen, a wood stable, and a brick smokehouse--the whole valued at \$3,700.

Dr. Dick's deed to lot 84 was not recorded until June 21, 1796. It was executed by William Hartshorne as attorney for Elizabeth Donaldson who was doubtless a sister of John Muir. The amount paid was £ 2,169 current money of Virginia. This compares somewhat roughly to the \$4,000 value which George Washington placed on his half-acre lot at the corner of Pitt and Prince Streets. For the record, the metes and bounds of the half acre with additional strip touching Pitt Street was described as follows:

Piece of ground on the south side of Duke Street,  
west side of Royal and east side of Pitt--  
Begin on south side of Duke 115 feet three inches  
west of Royal Street on eastern line of 10 foot  
alley;  
East with Duke Street 115 feet 3 inches to Royal Street;  
South with Royal Street 177 feet 1½ inches;  
West parallel to Duke and Wolfe Streets 255 feet 3  
inches to Pitt Street;  
North with Pitt Street 57 feet 1½ inches to an 18  
foot alley;  
East with the alley and parallel to Duke Street to  
eastern line of the aforesaid 10 foot alley (140  
feet);  
With alley north 120 feet to the beginning on Duke  
Street.

Under the date of July 3, 1797, a deed of trust was given by Elisha C. Dick and Hannah, his wife, to Abraham Hewes, George Taylor, and James Bruce Nicholls, to cover various debts. Besides the half acre tract "and all Houses, Buildings, Streets, Lanes, Allies (sic), Profits, Commodities, Hereditaments and appurtenances whatsoever . . ." this document also "put up" -- "a Woman Slave named Phoebe, a negro girl named Dinah, one other negro girl named Celia, a negro boy named Arthur, and all the further increases of the said Phoebe, Dinah and Celia . . ." Also listed were "all goods and chatells (sic), Plate and Household and Kitchen furniture and Books contained in and expressed in one other schedule hereto annexed."

On February 22, 1798, the Columbia Mirror and Alexandria Gazette unfolded a personal tragedy with publication of the notice:

PUBLIC SALE--Will positively be sold for ready money on the 15th of March next, at the house of Dr. Elisha C. Dick, all his Household and Kitchen

furniture, Four slaves, and a valuable collection of Books--to satisfy sundry claims of the United States.

ABRAM HEWES  
GEORGE TAYLOR  
J. B. NICHOLLS , Trustees

Late in the nineteenth century, the ownership of 408 Duke Street was separated from the adjoining 404 Duke Street property. The former was subsequently acquired by Dr. Kate Waller Barrett, founder with Charles Crittenton of the National Florence Crittenton Mission. The building remained in her estate until 1969 when it was sold to Mr. and Mrs. E. Grey Lewis.

B. Historical Events and Persons Connected with the Structure:

Dr. Dick is accorded fame as one of the three physicians attending General Washington in his last illness. With admirable foresight, it was Dr. Dick who stopped the mantel clock at the moment the first President died. He later obtained this time-piece from Mrs. Washington as a gift to the Alexandria Masonic Lodge where it is now displayed.

The inventory to Dick's July, 1797 deed of trust is included in toto because of the high socio-economic interest, its side-lights on his profession and particularly the importance of the furnishings in relation to the probable layout of the house itself.

Goods and chattells, plate, household and kitchen furniture and books belonging to Elisha Cullen Dick, which he pledges, together with certain real estate, in his deed of trust of 3 July 1797 . . .  
1 half gallon Tankard, 1 pint Cann, 4 half pint Tumblers,  
1 Tea Pot, 1 Sugar Dish, 1 Cream pot, 1 Slop Bason,  
4 Salt Sellars, 17 Table Spoons, 10 Tea do,  
1 Soup Ladle, 1 punch do, 1 punch Strainer, 1 Bronze Tea Urn plated, 1 Coffee do, 1 full Sett of Tea China, 1 Dining Sett Wedgewood ware, 1 Mahogany Bedstead, 3 pine do,  
2 Suit of Callico Bed Curtains, 2 Suit of do, Window do,  
3 feather Beds and Bedding, 1 Wilton Carpet, 1 Scotch do,  
12 Mahogany chairs, 1 do Square dining Table, 2 End do,  
1 Mahogany side Board, 1 do Card Table, 1 do Pellum (Pillar?) do, 1 Walnut Desk, 1 do Bureau, 1 do Book Case, 1 Do Small dining Table, 3 Windsor Chairs, 1 Clock, 3 looking Glasses Gilt frames, 5 Prints, 2 pr Brass andirons shovels and Tongs, 2 Japanned Lamps, 6 pr Brass Candlesticks, 1 Brass Kittle, 1 Bell Metal Skillett, 5 Iron potts, 1 do Skillett, 1 Copper Saucepann, 1 do

Coffee Kettle, 5 flat irons, 1 pr Iron dogs Shovel and Tongs, 5 pewter plates, 4 do Dishes, 6 Brass Chafing Dishes, 1 do Warming pan, 1 Fish Kettle, 1 dutch oven, 2 Grid Irons, 1 Frying pan, 2 pine Tables, 1 nest of Tubs and pails, 6 pottry pans, 1 Cullender, 1 Tin Coffee Pot, 1 do Cangle Box, Spoons, Flesh Forks, Potthooks, etc.

BOOKS -- Folio, Albenar 1 Vol, Quarto American Encyclopedia 15, Heisters Surgery 1, Pringles Army Diseases 1, Lewis's Materia Medica 1, Cullens do 1, Astruck on the V D 1, Blackstone's Commentaries 1, Blackstone's Appendix 1, Octavo Foarcrays Chemistry 3, Bells Surgery 6, Sydenham Works 2, Anatomy 3, Bell on Ulcers 1, Rush on Yellow Fever 1, Sparman on children 1, Mosson do, Duncan's Medical Cases 1, Ryan on consumption 1, Dobson on fixed Air (?) 1, Cullem Synapsis 2, Materia Medica 2, Essays Physical and Literary 3, Fordyce's prachse 1, Potts Works 3, Jones on Medicine 1, Homer clynical Experiments 1, Cranford on Animal heat 1, Zimmerman on the Dysentery 1, Medical Essays 5, Gregory's Works 3, Leake on Diseases of Women 2, Lindo Works 1, Coartard on Lead 1, Lind on Tissot 1, Duncan's heads of Lectures 1, Macbride's Essays 1, Cheseldon's Anatomy 1, Gibson do 1, Anatomical Dialogues 1, Rigby on Uterine Haemontiage (?) 1, Maclurg on the bile 1, Balfour on Fever 1, Hamilton's Midwifery 1, Osborne's do 1, Brown's Elements 1, Essay on lime Water by Whytte 1, Cavallo on Electricity 1, Mudge on Coughs 1, Shaw's Dispensitory (sic) 1, Swedior on the V. D. 1, Motherby's Dictionary 1, Botannical do 1, Bryce on the Yellow Fever 1, Ranby on Gun shot wounds 1, Clarke on the Attributes (?) 1, Love's Surveying, Pearses' Longini (?) 1, Calvert on Masonry 1, Locke on the Human Understanding 1, Alcoran 1, Annals of Queen Ann 1, Burke's Political Disquisition 1, Smith's Wealth of Nations 1, Hennings Justice 1, British Empire 1, Montesquieu's Spirits of Law 1, Hume's History 4, Hardies Tablet 1, Pope's Oddyssery (sic) 4, Homer's Iliad 2, Thompson's Seasons 1, Allison on Taste 1, Kainn's (?) Elements of Criticism 2, T (or Z?)immerman's Structure 1, Burtamaques principles of Natural Law 1, Jefferson and Genet's correspondence 1, The World displayed 8 (?), Goldsmith's Animated Nature 4, Shakespears plays 8, King of Prussia's Works 13, Blairs Sermons 2, Blairs Belles Lettres 2, Bagnah Tilemactius 2, Ossian Poems 1, Pamphlets and Manuscripts.

Dr. Dick's previous residence had been the Fawcett House which in 1796 was a cottage with two rooms downstairs and two up, two fireplaces, one upstairs and one downstairs plus another in the detached brick kitchen. His new house at 408 Duke Street undoubtedly had two rooms downstairs plus a small entrance hall.

The one chimney probably served two fireplaces with a third in the detached frame kitchen. Upstairs there may have been two bedrooms and likely a small hall room. Thus in trying to reconcile any furnishings with the old location and the new, the fireplace equipment would seem key items: "2 pr Brass andirons shovels and Tongs" for the house; "1 pr Iron dogs Shovel and Tongs" in the kitchen, where the latter are associated with cooking equipment. It is interesting that all four bedsteads were equipped with bed curtains and three with feather beds. The mahogany bedstead and window draperies would doubtless refer to the master bedroom. It was normal practice in a crowded household to set up at least two beds in a room.

An agreeable variety of mahogany and walnut pieces, carpets, prints, and looking glasses must have created pleasant surroundings for the Dick family.

Another illustrious occupant of the house, Dr. Kate Waller Barrett (1857-1925), is best known for her work in organizing at least ninety rescue houses across the nation for unwed mothers, known as the Florence Crittenton Missions. Born on her family's ancestral estate of "Clifton" in Falmouth, Virginia, she spent her youth in genteel poverty. In 1876, she married a young Episcopal minister, Reverend Robert South Barrett, who ministered in a slum area in Richmond, Virginia. Based on her observations of the social rejection accorded unwed mothers in this Richmond neighborhood, she later opened rescue missions in both Richmond and Atlanta, where unwed mothers could find shelter and Christian instruction. Soon after her marriage she was educated as a nurse. Later, at her husband's urgings, she went to Georgia Medical College and received her M. D. degree in 1892. While she never practiced medicine, she used the medical background in her social work. In 1893, she met Reverend Charles Crittenton at the annual convention of Christian Workers of the World in Atlanta. Crittenton had opened a mission similar to hers in a New York City slum in 1883. They merged operations and launched the national network of Florence Crittenton Missions, named for Crittenton's daughter who had died of scarlet fever at the age of four. Barrett was also active in women's suffrage and in world peace movements. She was instrumental in the rehabilitation of Arlington Mansion (in Arlington National Cemetery) and in the designation of a national park in the Shenandoah Valley.

C. Bibliography:

1. Primary and unpublished sources: Alexandria Deed Books C (Hustings), p. 443; K (Hustings), p. 119; Alexandria

County V-3, p. 19; Corporation Court Vol. 8, p. 29;  
Vol. 26, p. 26; Vol. 33, p. 254; Vol. 36, p. 462.  
Alexandria Gazette, issues as cited; Mutual Assurance  
Society of Virginia, microfilm records in the Alexandria  
Public Library.

2. Secondary and published sources:

Fitzpatrick, John C., ed. The Last Will and Testament  
of George Washington (Mount Vernon Ladies' Association,  
1939).

Wilson, Otto. Fifty Years' Work with Girls, 1883-1933:  
A Story of the Florence Crittenton Houses (Alexandria:  
The National Florence Crittenton Mission, 1933).

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: This building is a regionally typical three-bay town type brick residence as completed in the early 19th century.
2. Condition of fabric: The building has been considerably restyled, enlarged and remodeled throughout its history; in recent years repairs and maintenance have been minimal.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: Three-and-a-half stories plus cellar, three-bay front. Front block which is the subject of this report, approximately 24' by 32'.
2. Foundations: Rubble on three sides with brick along west wall. Cellar partition reflects plan above stairs. All masonry of solid construction and of ample proportions to exceed weight demands of a one-story structure. A full two or three-story building must have been contemplated from the first. Brick footing or ledge extends just above level of sidewalk. The cellar was originally paved with brick.
3. Wall construction, finish and color: Brick, Flemish bond across front and, significantly, in areas of the first story at the east and west that can be related to the original building; common bond elsewhere, including the paired chimneys. A row of headers and patchwork, which can be discerned across the front, possibly relates to the plate line of the early roof.

The brickwork has been painted yellow.

4. Porches, stoops, bulkheads: Originally there was an opening to the cellar under the center window. To the right or at the northwest corner and extending under the sidewalk, is a brick vault, probably for wine. In most Alexandria establishments (as was done here) these were later equipped with manhole covers and utilized for coal bins. At the back of the cellar--and slightly left of center--there was a second entranceway which was abandoned when additions rendered it inaccessible.
5. Chimneys: Paired outside end chimneys with curtain dominate the west end of the front block and date from the time the roof was raised. Evidence of the original chimney at the back of the house occurs in the rubble foundation.
6. Openings:
  - a. Doorways: Just to the right of the present late nineteenth century front door and partially concealed by the lattice of the porch is a long vertical joint and brick in-filling (common bond). The Flemish brickwork in this area is extremely well preserved, exhibiting finely tooled joints, but in addition, the ghost of a jamb--in all likelihood an indication of an earlier and perhaps the original entrance. Overhead is a projecting row of brick headers that apparently signifies an attempt at flashing for a shed or roof of sorts. As for assigning an approximate date for the roof itself--it would appear to be intermediate, at any rate, post Dr. Dick.
  - b. Windows: The windows for the most part have six-over-six light sash. Those on the front facade above the first floor retain their early nineteenth century character. The first floor windows were apparently enlarged later and Greek Revival window heads installed.
7. Roof:
  - a. Shape, covering: The main block with which we are here concerned has a gable roof covered with slate.
  - b. Cornice, eaves: There is a moulded brick modillion cornice.
- C. Description of Interior:
  1. Floor plan: Townhouse plan with narrow side hall and pair of



adjoining rooms. The stairway at the rear is constricted and winders are necessarily used above the first landing. Elsewhere in town the problem was normally solved by borrowing space for the stairhall from the adjoining room. The stairway appears to be largely original, that is early nineteenth century. Indeed the first two flights might conceivably date from the period of Dr. Dick's ownership, though these sections have been drastically altered in the late nineteenth century. The present basement stair is not original.

2. Special decorative features, trim, cabinet work: In a house that has undergone so many changes it is of interest to call attention to a few early examples of woodwork. Downstairs the bold wooden cornice in the entry is undoubtedly original with the building; likewise the raised panel cupboard door now located at the cellar stair. Upstairs the architrave mouldings, remnants of chair rails and baseboards and the mantel in the back bedroom would seem to date from the early nineteenth century.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: The house at 408 Duke Street faces north and is exposed at the east and west ends. Various additions extend eastward and southward. Until comparatively recent years the west side abutted the alley mentioned in the earlier deeds.

Someday the undeveloped grounds in the rear should become an inviting subject for an archeological study.

2. Outbuildings: The 1796 insurance records show several outbuildings behind the main block including a kitchen and stable.

Prepared by Worth Bailey, Consultant for  
The Historic Alexandria Foundation  
January 1967  
Edited by  
Antoinette J. Lee  
November 1975

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was a cooperative effort of the Historic Alexandria Foundation and the Historic American Buildings Survey to document some of the most important early alexandria residences for the HABS files. The historian was Worth Bailey, an Alexandria resident and former HABS employee. Photographer was Victor Amato. The material was edited in 1975 by Antoinette J. Lee, working on contract for HABS.